

acrobatics by poalimal

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Relationships: Ambiguous or Implied Relationship(s), Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Lucas Sinclair & Dustin Henderson, Lucas Sinclair & Mike Wheeler, Mike Wheeler & Dustin Henderson

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Summary:

"There's something wrong with Will."

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Author's Note:

Alternate universe where four of the Fantastic Five are dfab. Nicole is Lucas, Dusty is Dustin, Kate is Mike, and Eleven is still Eleven. Helen is Troy, Jamie is James. Will is Will.

Trope(s): We Used To Be Friends, Secret Relationship, Virus Victim Symptoms.

"Guys," Nicole said, "there's something wrong with Will."

"Oh, and you'd be the authority on what's *normal* with Will, wouldn't you?" said Dusty. "Spend so much *time* with him, do you?" Nicole crossed her arms and looked away. Dusty levied a long look at her outfit, her hair, and huffed out a laugh. "Yeah - that's what I thought."

"I don't need to spend time with him to know he's not acting normal!" Nicole snapped. "He's not acting weird for Will, he's acting weird for *anybody* - he tried to bite me!"

Dusty and Kate glanced at each other for a moment - then Dusty rolled her eyes and Kate looked away. "You know, you almost had me going there for a minute." Dusty scoffed. "But then I remembered: Will's not part of the zombie squad, he doesn't try to *eat people*." She feigned a smile. "How are Helen and Jamie, by the way? They let you take potty breaks these days?"

"Shut up," said Nicole, through her teeth, "about my friends."

"You, first," Dusty shot back. "And last time I checked, Weird Will Byers wasn't one of 'em."

Kate turned off the water faucet, dried her hands on a paper towel and threw it away -- all without so much as a glance at Nicole.

"Forget it," she said, to Dusty. "Let's just go."

"Wait!" said Nicole, behind them. "Just, please -- "

The door swung open. Angie Kim came in, already lighting up - then paused. "So-rry," she said, flatly, "am I like. Interrupting something?"

"No! We were just leaving," said Kate, and she grabbed Dusty by the wrist and dragged her out of the bathroom.

Nicole didn't look up from one of the little sinks, where she was fumblingly pretending to wash her hands, until Angie disappeared into the big stall and shut the door behind herself. She waited a moment, glancing around the otherwise empty bathroom - then she pulled down her turtleneck. The bite mark was bigger than it had been last night, more angry-looking and now leaking anew. Gnawing her lip, Nicole wet a paper towel and pressed it gently around the area, flinching slightly at the sensation.

"Aw, hell, Will," she said, under her breath.

Huddled in the alcove in front of Mr. Clarke's now empty lab, Dusty and Kate were trying to put a brave face on it.

"This is bad, this is bad, shit, Kate, this is *really* bad," Dusty babbled. "Did you hear her? Do you know what that means?"

"He's getting worse," Kate said grimly. She took in a deep breath and steeled her shoulders. "Ok. There's nothing else for it - we have to find Elle."

Dusty stared at her like she was crazy. "Are you crazy? We've been looking for your girlfriend for years!" She waved off Kate's half-hearted protests. "Get real, Kate - what makes you think she's even still alive?"

"I know she is: I can just feel it," said Kate, setting her jaw. Then, more desperately: "She's the only one who can help Will - she *has* to be out there somewhere."

"Yeah, but *where* somewhere, Kate?" Dusty said. "In case you've forgotten, we're still just regular old acrobats. If she's in the other

somewhere, we'll never find her!"

"Find who?" said a voice. Dusty and Kate jumped a foot in the air and turned together, fists raised and at the ready.

"Whoa, whoa, hey," said Will, taking a generous step back, "it's just me!"

"Oh, hey - hey, Will," said Kate, breathing hard, ashen-faced, slowly lowering her hands.

Dusty said, "Wh-where'd you come from?"

Will blinked - and raised his lunch bag. "The cafeteria? You guys were s'posed to meet me."

"Oh." Dusty and Kate glanced at each other. "Oh! Oh, right, yeah! Sorry!"

"We ran into *Lando* on the way here," said Dusty, making herself step forward, closer to him, "and you know how she gets."

"Dusty," said Will, exasperated, "you gotta stop calling Nicky Lando." Together all three of them started walking back towards the cafeteria. "She really does miss you guys, you know."

"Coulda fooled me," Kate said darkly. She paused for a moment, then peered into Will's face. "Wait a minute - how would *you* know if she misses us?"

Will blanked his face, shrugged - and then went slowly, horrifyingly red.